

Special
WORKOUT
Edition

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A.N.U. students
20th April, 1966

NATIONWIDE WORKOUT

University Students agitate for reform

Today throughout Australia, university students are foregoing their usual lectures and are taking part in community projects associated with education. They are doing this as a constructive protest against the alarming inadequacies of the Australian education system.

Education Committee formed

The National Union of Australian University Students has commissioned the following group of education experts to conduct an inquiry into education in Australia and to make recommendations on reform:

Mr. D. Anderson, Education Research Officer, University of Melbourne; Professor W. Connell, Professor of Education, University of Sydney; Dr. S. Encel, Political Science, Australian National University; Mr. H. Schoenheimer, Education, Monash University; Dr. R. Webb, Economics, University of Melbourne.

COME TO THE
A.N.U. TEACH-IN
ON EDUCATION
Tuesday, 26th April
at 7.30 p.m.
Childers Street Hall

In Adelaide, in Melbourne, in Canberra, in Sydney, in Brisbane — all round Australia — the intention is the same — to focus public attention on the crisis in education and advance the case for strong government action to remedy this crisis.

Even though we in Canberra are quite well off as far as education is concerned, A.N.U. students are showing their concern about the overall situation by distributing this broadsheet free to every home in Canberra and by undertaking constructive work in schools.

This broadsheet sets out briefly the case for drastic improvement in our school system, it outlines the role of the university student movement in such reform, and incorporates articles on some particular aspects of education.

Today's education system is a fundamental determinant of the shape of our future society. Only when the system is designed to meet future requirements can we expect adequate progress of society to ensue.

Only when the system provides opportunities for the maximum development of the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and moral qualities of the individual can we expect an informed society capable of exercising wisely its democratic freedoms; only when these opportunities obtain, can the wastage of human resources be avoided.

Is this the case with Australian education today or is it in fact not only not providing for the needs of the future, but still sets as its standard, the social order of a past era?

State governments have repeatedly stressed "there is a wide gap between the needs and demands of the community for education, and what State Governments can provide."

Yet the Commonwealth Government, who effec-



OUT OF CONTEXT

(By HANSARD)

One of the most important sections of the report of the Martin Committee was that the Commonwealth accept a more effective or larger commitment in teacher training.
— G. M. Bryant (A.L.P.)

★ ★
There is no requirement for the Government or the Parliament to accept the suggestions of any committee on anything.
— Senator Gorton (Govt.)

★ ★
This is certainly true of Australia where the demand for teachers far outstrips the number available. The number will inevitably lag behind the demand for some years to come.
— M. G. MacKay (Govt.)

★ ★
Lack of co-ordination, lack of system and an absence of intention to develop an overall attitude have been the almost unending characteristics of the Australian education system.
— G. M. Bryant (A.L.P.)

★ ★
I do not accept that there is a crisis in education in Australia at the moment. Indeed, I believe it is quite demonstrable that there is not. There are, of course, many things still to be done in education, but to call the present situation a crisis is, in my belief, sheer nonsense.
— Senator Gorton (Govt.)

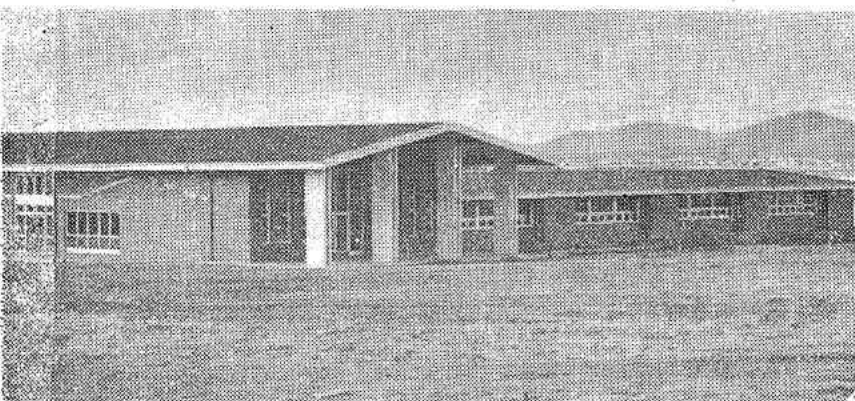
★ ★

Australia faces great problems in tertiary education. Many classes are too large. Academic staffs have done their best to meet these difficulties. We have had to suffer quotas and we, along with the Australian Universities' Commission, would like to see an end to all quotas in universities. They mean a wastage of human talent, and any such wastage is a tragedy.
— M. G. MacKay (Govt.)

★ ★
This is a progressive Government. It does not intend to implement all of the recommendations at this stage. I think that my primary duty is to keep the Socialists out of government.
— W. G. Turnbull (Govt.)

★ ★
On the recommendations of the committee on teaching cost at medical hospitals.

★ ★
Catholic authorities in almost every State have indicated crisis conditions in their schools, particularly in respect of accommodation and teachers in both primary and secondary schools.
— L. J. Reynolds (A.L.P.)



Education in the A.C.T.

(Mr. A. G. Martin)

Recently in Canberra a committee has been considering the need for a college of advanced education. In the course of discussion on this subject two other educational requirements for Canberra have suddenly loomed large.

The first is the need for a Teachers' College in Canberra (which under the existing educational system is denied us by the Federal Government), and following automatically is the need for a fully-autonomous integrated Canberra education system.

Of the many arguments for an autonomous education system it is only possible to mention briefly a few. They

fall into three categories: those arising from Canberra's special nature in regard to educational needs and population growth; the inherent disadvantages in maintaining the existing connection with the New South Wales system; and finally, the advantages which would be obtained from an integrated autonomous system. Canberra is the fastest-

CURTIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

growing city in Australia; it has the largest proportion of school-age children of any city in Australia. These children attend school longer than they do elsewhere in Australia and their parents, being professional people, expect much from their children educationally.

An expected population of at least 500,000 is surely enough for an independent system.

New South Wales has her own problems — the Wyndham Scheme suits her needs. But educational requirements in New South Wales differ from those in Canberra.

Education is a science — it requires experiment and research. Canberra, with an integrated scheme including teacher training, secondary and tertiary teaching, could lead the way in Australian educational research.

N.U.A.U.S. and education

N.U.A.U.S. is the newspeak abbreviation of National Union of Australian University Students, the national body whose membership consists of 90,000 tertiary students. It generally co-ordinates Australian students' activity and acts on behalf of University students a whole. In so doing, it has, among other things, formulated detailed proposals for educational reform.

N.U.A.U.S. believes there is a case for immediate increases in finance for education.

Its policy recommends the establishment of a commission of inquiry into primary, secondary and technical education, similar to the recent commission on tertiary education.

Recognising inadequacies in many aspects of the present system N.U.A.U.S. urges:

improved training conditions and higher salaries for teachers and the provision of adequate buildings to alleviate overcrowding in classrooms; a degree of interstate co-ordination; free text books and equipment for school children; better library facilities; greater use of modern teaching

methods and equipment;

the establishment of a Commonwealth education research and information centre.

To do all this would require additional finance of such a magnitude as to require considerable diversion from other social uses, or imposition of further taxation.

A comparison between Australian and American expenditure suggests the need for increased expenditure of the order of \$200 million.

Recognising this, N.U.A.U.S. suggests, if taxes are increased, the extra revenue should accompany greater progressiveness in the income tax, or should come from higher inheritance duties.

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IS THERE A CRISIS?

The first point to be made is: Let us think and discuss the issues and not argue about terminology, e.g., what precisely does crisis mean? The debating teams can argue that one. In this article we look at one or two of the major issues.

Perhaps the most telling statement is that made by Karmel in his much quoted Buntine Oration of 1962.

This address illustrated two major points:

(a) In relation to other developed countries Australia's expenditure on education is relatively and depressingly low.

(b) Of the 20+ countries quoted in Karmel's tables by 1970 all of them, except Australia, on projected targets will have substantially increased their education expenditure. We will have slipped even further behind unless some drastic action is taken.

See diagrams.

Finding the money and agreeing to put it up is the easy part.

What do we do with it when we have it? What do we achieve? Where are we going? How do we use our resources most profitably? How do we use our resources to their best and fullest potential? And so on.

In other words, "Given the quid how do we spend it?"

Where is our plan?

That is the key question! A question which no government in Australia has yet answered.

Nor, and perhaps most disappointing, have the parties not in power (especially the various official oppositions throughout the country) answered this question. Government and opposi-

tion alike tell us they have a plan — but all these plans are secret.

It is useless to mouth as politicians so frequently do "But we do have a plan" — when the follow-up question — "What is your plan?" — is conveniently left unanswered.

Let us have a quick look at the various political parties in Australia in relation to this issue.

The smaller parties such as the Communist Party, the Australian Republican Party etc., can be skimmed over for obvious reasons.

The Liberal Party, the Liberal Country Party, the Liberal Country League, whether it's a coalition or under some variant name can be shorthanded to the Liberal Party.

The Liberal Party is the Government in four of the six states and the Commonwealth.

Traditionally the Liberal Party approach is an ad hoc one.

Various reports have been produced by expert committees such as the Victorian Ramsey or Australian Martin Committees.

Some form of a plan has been laid down by these Committees.

The Governments concerned have merely tabled them and picked electoral sop pieces out of them.

A prime example is the recent Martin Report on tertiary education.

Large sections of this re-

port, such as that on Teacher Training, have been shelved or where some action has been taken it is a piecemeal and vote catcher approach which neglects the principles involved.

An example of the latter is the Committee's recommendation for the automatic awarding of Commonwealth scholarships upon the successful completion of first year at university at first attempt.

The government granted a paltry increase of 250 later year awards, from 1,280 to 1,530 (they also increased the number of open entrance awards from 5,000 to 6,000).

Perhaps the one exception in Australia to this charge of no plan is the Liberal Government of New South Wales.

It inherited from the tired Labor Government of that State the Wyndham Plan.

To a large extent the Wyndham Plan (whether it's a good plan or not is no concern in this article) is being implemented — but essentially this approach has only been applied to secondary schooling.

What has the Australian Labor Party to offer?

Essentially a few general principles and an internal wrangle about State aid.

The Labor Government of Tasmania wanders on, the recently elected South Australian Labor Government

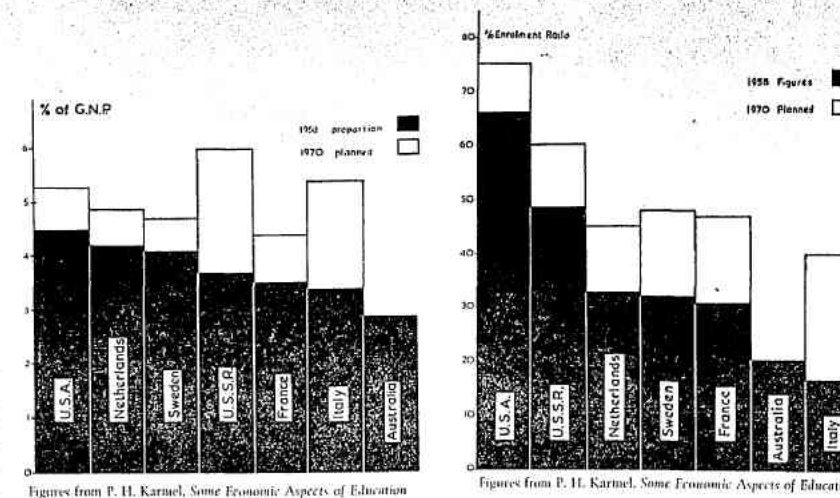
At the present time . . .

- schools are short of qualified teachers,
 - many teachers are inadequately trained and qualified for the job they are asked to do,
 - States are finding it difficult to provide the new accommodation needed,
 - there is a large accumulation of makeshift, sub-standard and obsolete school accommodation, and
 - equipment and supplies of all kinds are required in increasing quantities.
- State Ministers and Directors of Education.

fore of the importance to the nation and to the individual child of massive financial support for public education by the Commonwealth Government.

The Canberra Teachers' Association has shown that this can be done most effectively by bringing home to local communities the needs of their own schools, especially in aspects of education which are not always recognised by parents, such as the need for remedial teachers and relief staff.

If the problems of large classes, shortage of highly trained staff, increased period loads and makeshift classrooms are to be overcome, the public must be made continually aware of them and furthermore must realise the need to join with teachers and parents in convincing the Federal Government that "the will of the people" demands the provision of funds which will ensure adequate education for



LEFT: Comparison of the percentages of Gross National Product spent on education in different countries.

RIGHT: Comparison of the percentages of the 15-19 year age group enrolled in educational institutions in different countries.

has introduced some long overdue reforms.

But again, "Where is the plan?"

What does the Democratic Labor Party (D.L.P.) have to offer?

Essentially, in terms of education policies, a reiteration of what the A.L.P. says and to a large extent what the A.L.P. was saying prior to the much quoted "split of 1955."

Perhaps the major difference between the Federal A.L.P. and the D.L.P. is that the latter knows where it stands on State Aid.

Finally what has the Country Party to offer?

Decentralised education, a better deal for the country — that is country as opposed to city — and similar to the Liberal Party an ad hoc approach.

So the challenge is reiterated. Australia — Education — No Plan.

A plan for education must contain at least the following elements.

(a) A firm basis in the conditions of the present situation.

(b) A foundation in expert educational theory and research.

(c) Expressed long term aims or ideals.

(d) Expressed practical goals.

(e) A year by year setting out of the various stages and sub goals.

(f) Mechanism for review in light of changed circumstances.

(g) It must be conceived in an objective rather than partisan environment, an independent authority is needed to formulate it and continually evaluate it.

This article has tried to raise some of the more important questions in the two fundamental issues of finance and planning.

It has not concerned itself with the details and deficiencies in the present structure.

The detailed fact is quoted so frequently in the downtown press.

How very often we read that there is a teacher shortage, an overcrowding of classes, schools accommodated in temporary buildings, students excluded by quotas

from universities, fees rising and so on?

CONCLUSION

The author's contention in this article is a simple one. More money is needed to produce more of what we are now producing.

A plan is needed so that we can spend wisely and finish up somewhere.

Australia is a nation, and our education system must be viewed from a national viewpoint.

The point which I have tried to make with the undercurrent is — something is radically wrong with the present system, it can be improved and the time for a complete overhaul is long overdue.

And of course there are still a multitude of questions to be considered, especially those relating to the quality of the system and the product.

PETER SELLERS
Education Vice-President
1965
N.U.A.U.S.

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Education and the Federal Budget

(Extract from "Education")

An examination of the Federal Budget shows that Commonwealth funds could be made available to meet the pressing needs of primary and secondary education, and teacher training. The failure to do so shows that the Federal Government is depressing education in Australia.

This is evident even in Canberra where education is the direct responsibility of the Federal Government.

A survey recently conducted by the Canberra Teachers' Association shows that Canberra schools are seriously short of teachers and classrooms.

Nearly 3,000 primary school children (approximately 23 per cent. of the total) are in classes of forty or more, and almost fifty additional teachers are needed to reduce sizes of classes alone.

Ten more teachers are needed to provide remedial classes for retarded children and slow learners.

And in addition to these there is an urgent need for a pool of relief teachers, as shown by the fact that over one thousand days already this year have been lost by teacher absences.

Side by side with the short-

age of teachers there is an immediate need for fifteen additional classrooms.

To reduce the size of classes and to permit the formation of remedial classes, approximately sixty more classrooms are needed.

If such basic education needs are being ignored in Canberra itself it is hardly surprising that the Federal Government shows so little concern for primary, secondary and teacher education throughout the rest of Australia.

"THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE"

The Treasurer claims in his Budget speech that Commonwealth expenditures "reflect . . . the response by a democratic government to what it believes to be the will of the people."

The inference to teachers is clear.

The public must be made more aware than ever be-



Education as investment

Education is a form of investment whereby people acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which are useful and valuable in later life. Like any other form of investment, it entails a current cost and the expectation of future benefits. Educated people may thus be thought of as constituting a stock of capital — in this case, human capital. As with physical capital, it is subject to depreciation: knowledge and skills become obsolete, and people die.

Tax authorities at present do not recognise expenditure on education as a form of investment comparable to investment in physical assets.

If they were to grant parity of treatment this would mean that educational expenditures could be written off, in form of depreciation allowances, against the income a person went on to earn as a result of his educational attainments.

Income tax thus discriminates against those who invest in themselves as compared with those who invest in physical assets.

Education enhances people's productivity in various ways.

The importance of the three R's and vocational training is obvious, but perhaps of equal or greater importance is the greater adaptability of the educated.

Well-educated people are

better able to learn new skills, and to exploit new opportunities than are the ill-educated, and they are also probably more mobile, both occupationally and geographically.

A mobile work force is needed if the potentialities of economic growth are to be realised in full, since the growth process can involve marked changes in the nature and location of employment.

In a world where knowledge advances rapidly and where old skills can quickly become redundant, a good general education provides a valuable hedge against technological displacement of skills.

And this hedge is valuable not only to the individual, but to society in general.

As well as benefiting the individual in his role as producer, education assists him in his role as consumer — not only in the sense that

he is likely to buy more wisely but in the much broader sense that education influences the quality of the life he leads.

And, of course, it is the belief in the cultural value of education that accounts for much of the private demand and public support for education.

Society at large benefits both from mass education and from the contribution of highly educated elites.

University literacy (in that it facilitates communication) and the wide acceptance of some common values (in that it reduces the area of uncertainty surrounding human behaviour) tremendously simplify and promote the transactions of society.

In the economic sphere, the results are a greater volume of trade, wider and more perfect markets, and promotion of competition.

In the political sphere a reasonably literate and well-informed electorate is needed for the proper functioning of political democracy, and good government requires the services of well-educated politicians and administrators.

Finally, the social benefits of new knowledge, some of it acquired as a by-product of higher education, can be immense.

Extract from Current Affairs Bulletin.